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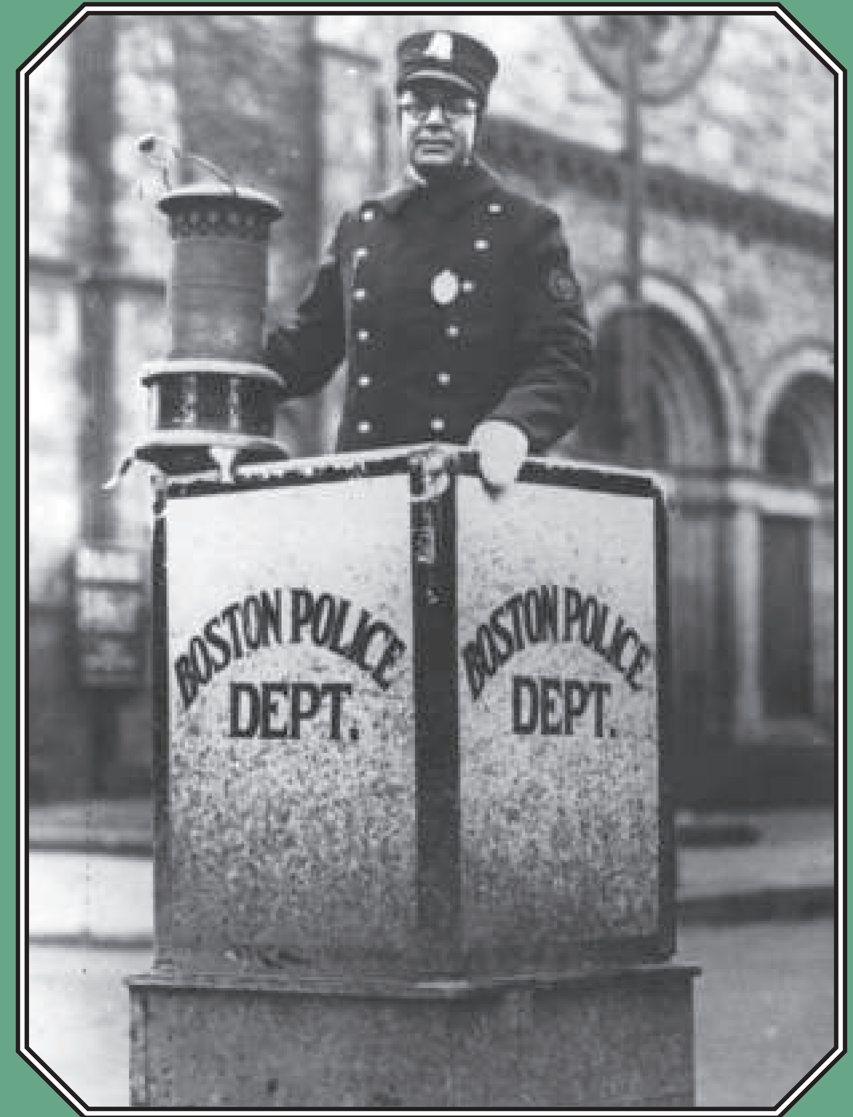
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# My Great-Grandpa Collins




by Jimmy Keating





# *My Great-Grandpa Collins*

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This is Great-Grandpa Collins as a boy. He grew up in a small town in Ireland.



For my History Day project, I researched the life of my great-grandfather. This is what I learned about him. My family called him Great-Grandpa Collins. His name was James Patrick Collins. He was born in a small town in Ireland in 1888. He died in 1977. He was eighty-nine years old. I never met him, but my Grandma says I look just like him.

Great-Grandpa Collins was from a family of eight boys and girls. He was the youngest child in the family. His father was a farmer. His mother worked very hard taking care of the children.

Great-Grandpa Collins was a tall man. He loved to laugh. He loved to tell stories and jokes. My daddy loved to visit him when he was a little boy. I wish I could have met Great-Grandpa.



Great-Grandpa Collins must have seen lots of interesting things through his spectacles. He was very proud to be a policeman.






On my tenth birthday, my dad gave me a special present. He gave me my Great-Grandpa Collins's spectacles. Dad remembers when Great-Grandpa Collins would read him the Sunday comics. Great-Grandpa always wore the spectacles when he was reading. He would laugh so hard that the spectacles would fall halfway down his nose.

Dad also gave me Great-Grandpa Collins's police badge and hat. Great-Grandpa was a policeman. When I was a little boy, I pretended that I was a policeman. Sometimes Daddy let me wear Great-Grandpa's hat as a special treat.





Statue of Liberty



Great-Grandpa Collins came to America in 1915. Two of his brothers had already immigrated to America. He lived with them at first. He came on a ship to Ellis Island, which is near the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. Great-Grandpa Collins loved to tell how the Statue of Liberty was the first "person" he saw when he arrived in America.

Great-Grandpa and his brothers lived in Boston, Massachusetts. After a few months in Boston, he met a young woman he liked. Her name was Claire. She was also from Ireland. She was a nurse. They both loved to dance and sing. They got married two years after they met. Dad says they used to sing and dance in their living room even when they were old.

**Did You Know?** **Ellis Island**

Ellis Island is located in New York Harbor, New York. Between 1892 and 1954, Ellis Island was the fist stop in America for immigrants who came across the Atlantic Ocean. Ellis Island is now an immigration museum.

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**immigrated:** moved into a country







In this wedding picture, Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma are standing with many friends. They were married in Boston.

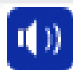


Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma Collins lived in Boston all of their lives. They had three children. One of them was my Grandma Nancy.

My Grandma Nancy says all her friends loved Great-Grandpa. He built the best snowmen in the neighborhood. Every Sunday the children came to hear him read the comics. They loved to watch his glasses fall down his nose.

Great-Grandpa was a brave policeman. He saved three children from drowning. He caught at least four bank robbers. Grandma Nancy says that every night when she was a girl, she whispered to her father that he was the best policeman in Boston.



 Our Collins family reunion

 Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma Collins were proud of being Irish. They were proud of being American citizens too.

They had fourteen grandchildren and thirty-six great-grandchildren, including me. Last summer we had a huge family reunion. We had a picnic at a park.

Everyone brought American food and Irish food. I made Irish soda bread from our family recipe. Lots of relatives brought family photos.

There were so many people having fun. We sang Irish songs. Some of the children did Irish step dancing.

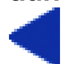
If Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma Collins hadn't come to America and gotten married, none of their family would have been born.

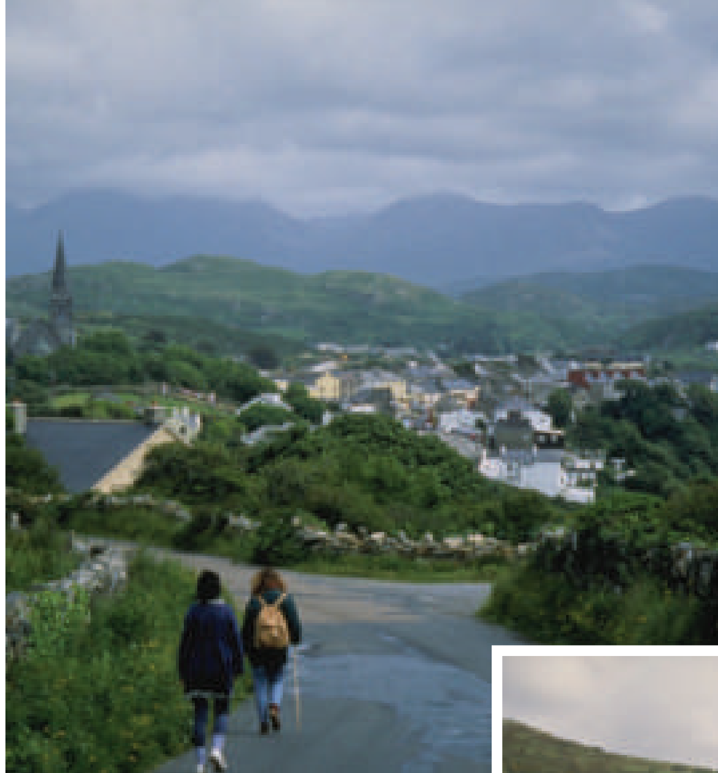
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**reunion:** special party that brings together a family or old friends

**step dancing:** a special type of dancing









Here are photos of the town where Great-Grandpa Collins was born.



 Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma left Ireland when they were young. They only went back to Ireland for visits two times. In those days, people didn't travel as much as they do now. They didn't talk on the telephone as often either. They could not e-mail each other. Instead, they wrote lots of letters. I think Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma were very homesick for their family and country.





My dad has researched our Irish relatives. Many still live in the town where Great-Grandpa Collins was born. Six months ago, I wrote to one of my cousins in Ireland. Now I have a new pen pal. His name is Jimmy Collins. That is my name too, except Collins is my middle name. My pen pal Jimmy Collins lives in Great-Grandpa Collins's town.

This summer my family and I are going to Ireland. I cannot wait to meet Jimmy. Jimmy promised to show me the farmhouse where Great-Grandpa Collins grew up. He sent me a picture of the house. His aunt and uncle live there now.

Jimmy also sent a picture of himself. Grandma Nancy says we look like twins. She says it's eerie. She says we both look exactly like Great-Grandpa Collins!





Jimmy Collins from Ireland



Jimmy Collins from Massachusetts





## Talk About It

1. What three things does Jimmy have that belonged to his Great-Grandpa Collins? Why are they important to him?
2. What things made Great-Grandpa Collins special in the opinion of his daughter, Grandma Nancy?

## Write About It

3. Jimmy and his family like to eat Irish soda bread. The recipe came from his Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma. Does your family have a favorite recipe or favorite kind of food? On a separate paper, write about this food. Why is it special to your family? Do you like it?

## Extend Language

Mexicans are from Mexico. Americans are from America. Where are Irish people from?

What other words do you know for people from different lands?

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